



Emergency Preparedness Office

SAFE DRINKING WATER

After a disaster water systems may not be working. You can survive without food for several days, but only for a short time without water. Maintain a one-week supply of water for each member of your family.

HOW MUCH WATER DO YOU NEED?

Store at least one gallon of water per person per day. Additional water will be needed for bathing and other purposes.

HOW DO YOU STORE WATER?

Use one or two-gallon containers available at your local supermarket or five-gallon jugs available from water distributors. Larger containers are also available from disaster supply stores. Clearly mark each container with the current date, and replace stored water after six months. Keep water containers in a cool, dark place.

EMERGENCY WATER SOURCES

Commercially bottled water
Ice cubes
Canned fruit and vegetable juices

Liquid from other canned goods
Toilet tank at the back of the toilet (if no
chemical disinfectant is used)
Hot water tank

To get water from the hot water tank, turn off the gas or electricity to the water heater and open the valve at the bottom of the unit. To allow the tank to drain, it might be necessary to open the valve at the top of the water heater or turn on a hot water faucet in the house. Note: Do not re-start your water heater until the water and gas or electrical service has been restored and the unit has been checked by your utility supplier (gas or electric company). As an extra precaution, water from toilet tanks and water heaters should be purified (see below) prior to use.

HOW TO PURIFY WATER

If water is cloudy, strain it through a paper towel or several layers of clean cloth into a clean container to remove any sediment or floating matter.

Boiling

Boiling is the safest method of purifying water. Bring water to a rolling boil for at least one minute. Increase boiling time to least three minutes if you live at high elevations above 6,500 feet. To improve the taste, allow the water to cool, then pour the water from one clean container to another several times.

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Tablets

Purification tablets, which contain halazone, iodine, or globaline, are available at drug stores or sporting goods stores. Follow the label directions for these products. Tablets have a shelf life of about two years and lose their effectiveness if allowed to become damp.

Bleach

Use unscented, liquid household bleach. It must contain sodium hypochlorite, preferably 5.25%. Bleach that contains other ingredients may be poisonous. Use an eyedropper to add bleach to water and use it only for that purpose. Mix thoroughly by stirring or shaking water in a container (see table below). Let stand for 30 minutes. A slight chlorine odor should be detectable in the water. If you cannot detect a chlorine odor you should repeat the dosage and let the water stand for an additional 15 minutes before using. Liquid chlorine bleach loses strength over time. Write the date of purchase on the label and rotate the supply of bleach to keep it fresh. If bleach is six months to one year old, the amount used for purification should be doubled. Bleach older than one year should not be used to purify water. **Do not** use dry or powdered bleach products intended for swimming pool or laundry use.

Liquid swimming pool chlorine, which contains 10 to 12% sodium hypochlorite, can also be used. If so, use one half the amount of bleach shown in the following table. **Do not** use liquid swimming pool chlorine if the label indicates that there are active ingredients other than sodium hypochlorite.

Amount of Water	Clear Water	Cloudy Water
1 quart	2 drops	4 drops
1 gallon	8 drops	16 drops
5 gallons	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon

Iodine

Tincture of iodine can also be used for purification. Follow the same directions for mixing as with liquid bleach, using the amounts from the table below.

Amount of Water	Clear Water	Cloudy Water
1 quart	5 drops	10 drops
1 gallon	20 drops	½ teaspoon
5 gallons	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons

Treat only enough water to last a maximum of 48 hours to reduce the chance of recontamination.